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Idled NYC educators do nothing but sign in remotely, even from Europe

By Susan Edelman

January 14, 2023 9:53am Updated



The suspended staffers, while fully paid, are required to do nothing but sign in and out by email and "stay in the NYC area."

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This is where the rubber meets the living room.

Scores of New York City educators removed from public schools and put in “rubber rooms” — the infamous spaces where those under investigation or awaiting disciplinary trials are held — have been sent home to report remotely, The Post has learned.

The suspended staffers, while fully paid, are required to do nothing but sign in and out by email and “stay in the NYC area.”

Most comply with the rule, but a few defiantly jetted to Germany and the West Indies, a high school teacher awaiting a disciplinary hearing told The Post.

“No one knows where you are. You could be in Alaska or Hawaii on a vacation – they don’t know,” the teacher said.



“You can sign in at 8 am, roll over and go back to sleep,” she added.

The tenured educators can run errands, go shopping, or meet friends for lunch while on the city payroll.



Scores of New York City educators removed from public schools and put in "rubber rooms" have been sent home to report remotely, The Post has learned.

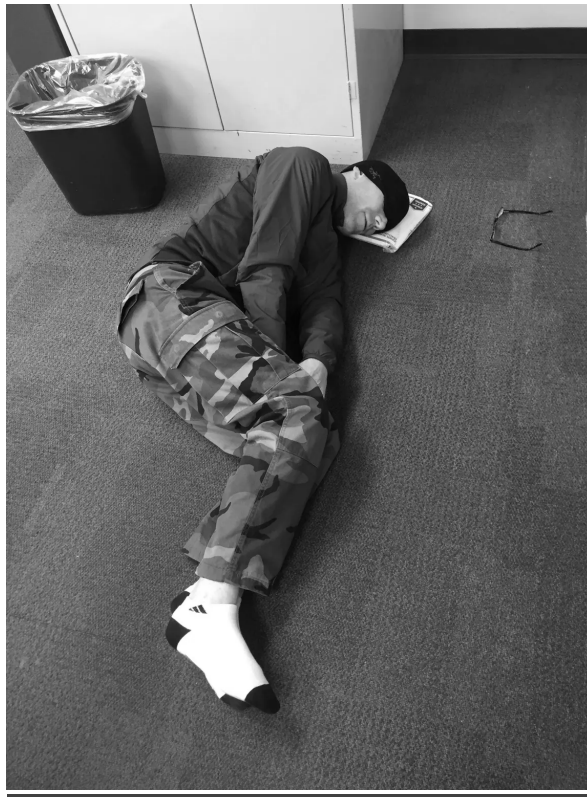
"None of the teachers I know jeopardize their jobs by traveling long distances," said Betsy Combier, a paralegal who writes the "NYC Rubber Room Reporter" blog.

At least 200 suspended staffers are currently stationed at home, Combier estimates.

With base teacher salaries ranging from \$61,070 to \$128,657 a year, the taxpayer cost for these stay-at-home educators could range from \$12 million to \$25 million.

"What a massive waste of money. They're sitting in 'rubber homes' doing nothing," Combier said.

The exiled educators included 92 DOE staffers, including teachers and assistant principals accused last year of submitting fake COVID-19 vaccine cards. But a Brooklyn judge on Dec. 30 ordered the DOE to return staffers who sued to their former jobs until they get hearings. The DOE is in the process of sending them back. A criminal investigation is ongoing.



Exiled teachers used to be warehoused in rubber rooms in school buildings and offices, where some had nothing to do but nap..

The DOE's rubber room move reflects another shift in the notorious holding pens.

Ex-Mayor Bloomberg agreed in 2010 to close several massive "reassignment centers" where at least 600 teachers accused of misconduct or incompetence did nothing but read, nap, knit, and kibitz. One Queens teacher ran a lucrative real-estate business on the side. Some not terminated after sexual misconduct are permanently sidelined

Since then, the DOE has scattered smaller rubber rooms across the city.

Rubber roomers stayed home during the COVID shutdown, but returned to buildings in September 2021.

Two days before the start of this school year on Sept. 6, the DOE sent an email saying they would be "temporarily reporting remotely." No reason was given, but one teacher was told "no central office space is available."



Ex-Mayor Bloomberg agreed in 2010 to close several massive "reassignment centers" for educators accused of misconduct or incompetence.

Getty Images

“As you must be able to report in person when directed, you are required to be in the NYC area on scheduled days of work.” the missive states. “Any work assigned to you will be provided through your DOE email.”

Three teachers told The Post the DOE hasn’t told them to report in person since or given them any work – and barred them from remote workshops or training sessions.

“All I do is sign in at 8 am and sign out at 2:50 pm. No assignments, no nothing,” said another high-school teacher awaiting a decision in his administrative trial after five years as a rubber roomer. He’s fighting charges he made inappropriate comments to a female student.

Last year, the teacher went to a Queens office building where all he did was distribute mail and sometimes Xerox papers while collecting his nearly \$136,000 salary.

“I’m happy to go home. I didn’t want to be in that building and have to do the mail,” he said.

Another veteran teacher was accused of making an insensitive comment to a student spent last year in a DOE basement on Rockaway Boulevard with up to 15 other rubber roomers.

“Absolutely no work,” he said. “We chatted. We played board games. We did whatever we could not to kill each other.”

151 **What do you think? [Post a comment.](#)**

Now at home since September, “I watch TV,” he laughed. “I clean up the house.”

He also takes antidepressants, he said, because “I feel like a piece of garbage.”

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James Pierce

14 January, 2023

To be fair, these people have only been accused of wrongdoing. It hasn't yet been proven whether or not they are guilty. Anybody can accuse someone of anything. That being said, there must be a more efficient way of dealing with this.

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Horace Mann

14 January, 2023

We can abolish public education; that can't come too soon. Then teachers will be fireable, just like any other, private sector worker. In the mean time, we need to bring back the Spoils system.

When gov't was small (225 years ago), it didn't have enough workers (e.g. postmaster) to notice. A new chi...

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Mr. C

14 January, 2023

Problem is it takes months to years to get a hearing.

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Hawk1958

14 January, 2023

I am shocked, shocked to learn that WOKE DEMOCRATS are paid for not working and not even showing up as required for continued payment.

More evidence that the state is abusing citizen taxpayers.

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Forum Poster

14 January, 2023

I don't think you read the story fully.

All these teachers are accused of inappropriate things, many of a sexual or feelings nature.

Woke people don't do that - I'm guessing all the sidelined people are Republicans cashing in for doing nothing..

I'm sure the woke put them there - but the R's are cashi...

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14 January, 2023


Don't forget pension and other benefits.

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Broncocinco

14 January, 2023

And for only 9 months a year.

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Horace Mann

14 January, 2023

The credentialed babysitters receive their share of gov't spending based on 180d @6.5 hrs. (i.e. 1,170 h/y).

I have found that hourly rate closely matches the hourly which the skoolz "pay" their staffers back at HQ (who supposedly work a more traditional 2,000 h/y).

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